

Land Use and Growth Management Element

Introduction

Land use within a community is the pattern of residential commercial, industrial and public development, interspersed with what is generally considered as open space, such as forests and natural features, undeveloped land, agriculture and parks and recreational areas. The evolution of land use within a community is the product of local economic conditions; growth and development is based on such factors as access to jobs and employment and the availability of affordable land for new housing or commercial development.

Land use forms the basis for master planning and determines, to a large extent, a Town's need to provide public facilities and infrastructure, transportation networks and services, and protection of environmental resources. As communities plan for their future, determining how and where growth and development should occur will provide the basis for planning where investments for municipal services will be needed, as well as to determine what controls will be necessary to protect areas of the Town from unwanted development. Communities have the ability to control land use and development patterns through a variety of mechanisms, including zoning and subdivision regulations, provision of public utilities and infrastructure, and protection of open space lands through acquisitions and the dedications of conservation restrictions/ easements.

The following sections provide an overview of the current land use patterns in Amesbury. The discussion includes a breakdown of the percentages of land devoted to different types of development, the Town's zoning patterns and initiatives in past years to control growth and development, an overview of recent land use trends based upon the Town's initiatives, and a listing of current land development activities that will impact development trends and land use activities in the future.

Current Land Use Patterns

Amesbury's development patterns, as depicted on the Inventory of Existing Land Uses map, are reflective of its historical roots as a traditional New England mill village. Central to this village character is a mixed use downtown surrounded by

older residential neighborhoods of higher density housing, forming a densely developed core area. From this “urban” core, spokes of residential development extend outward in various densities along key roadways, with other neighborhood areas clustered adjacent to Amesbury’s significant natural resources: Lake Attitash, Lake Gardner, the Merrimack River or areas with significant view corridors. Between these spokes of residential development are substantial open space areas consisting of undeveloped and agricultural lands, highlighting the Town’s scenic hills and valleys. It is the combination of these open space networks along with the historical village center that provides the unique landscape that portrays Amesbury’s quality of life.

Another significant characteristic noted on the land use inventory could be attributed to the advent of the interstate highway system, particularly the automobile-oriented “commercial strip” development adjacent to the I-95/I-495 intersection, and the associated connection provided by Route 110 to the Towns of Salisbury and Merrimac. Land uses along the Route 110 corridor are more diverse in nature, consisting of a mix of small- and large-lot commercial and industrial development interspersed with various densities of older and newer residential uses. Additional industrial areas are located south of I-495, along the Hunt Road corridor, and in the Amesbury Industrial Park, all within close proximity to the interstate system.



Land Use Classifications

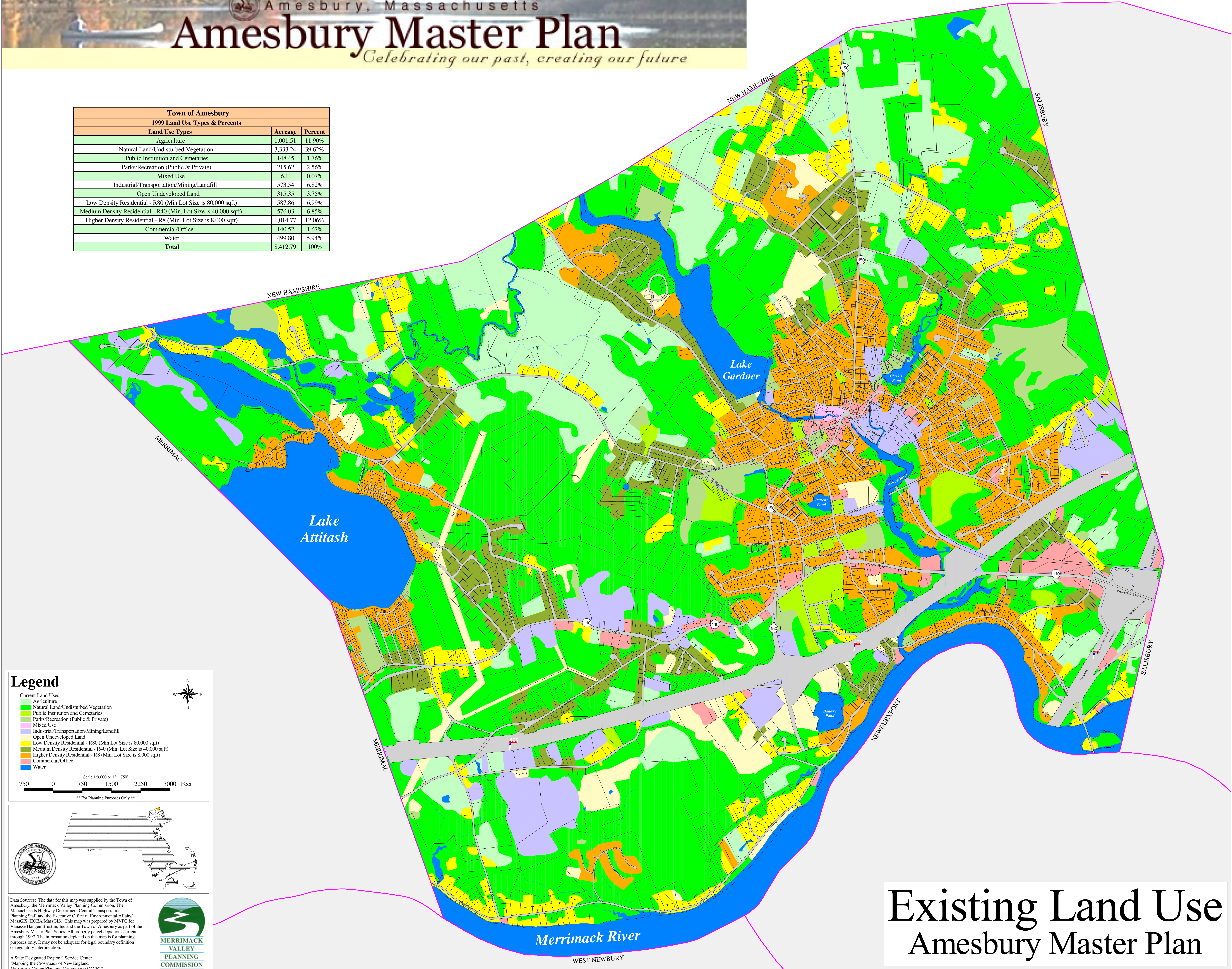
The Inventory of Existing Land Uses map was prepared by the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC) and reflects land use conditions during 1999 on a 1997 parcel base. Additional development trends since 1997 are discussed in later sections of this chapter. The data for the Inventory has been interpreted from aerial photography by the UMASS Department of Forestry Resource Mapping Project, with updates and verification provided by the Town of Amesbury, MVPC, the Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway) and the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs/MassGIS (EOEA/MassGIS). The land use categories depicted on the land use inventory are defined according to the Land Use Code Definitions system utilized by MassGIS, and have been consolidated as listed in Table LU-1.



Amesbury Master Plan

Celebrating our past, creating our future

Town of Amesbury		
1999 Land Use Types & Percents		
Land Use Types	Acreage	Percent
Agriculture	1,001.51	11.90%
Natural Land/Undisturbed Vegetation	3,333.24	39.62%
Public Institution and Cemeteries	148.45	1.76%
Parks/Recreation (Public & Private)	215.62	2.56%
Mixed Use	6.11	0.07%
Industrial/Transportation/Mining/Landfill	573.54	6.82%
Open Undeveloped Land	315.35	3.75%
Low Density Residential - R80 (Min Lot Size is 80,000 sqft)	587.86	6.99%
Medium Density Residential - R40 (Min. Lot Size is 40,000 sqft)	576.03	6.85%
Higher Density Residential - R8 (Min. Lot Size is 8,000 sqft)	1,014.77	12.06%
Commercial/Office	140.52	1.67%
Water	499.80	5.94%
Total	8,412.79	100%



Legend


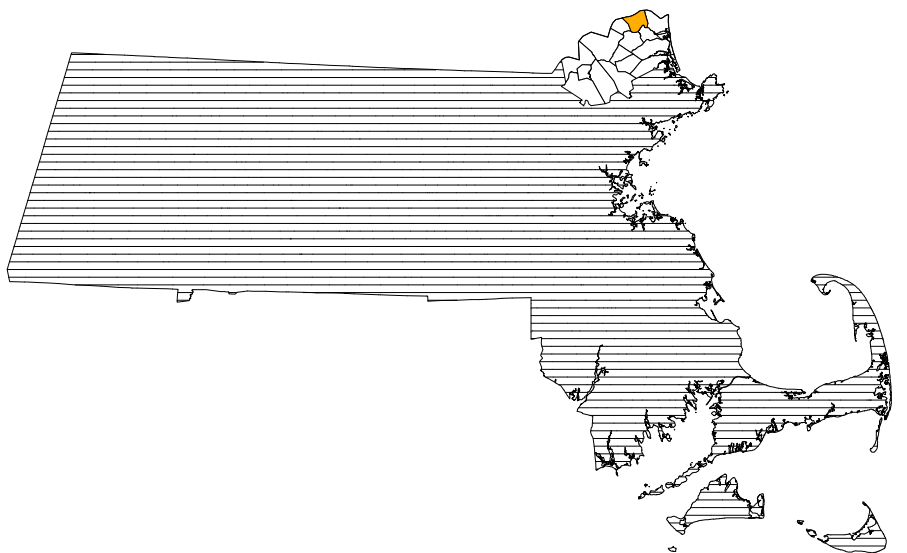
Current Land Uses

- Agriculture
- Natural Land/Undisturbed Vegetation
- Public Institution and Cemeteries
- Parks/Recreation (Public & Private)
- Mixed Use
- Industrial/Transportation/Mining/Landfill
- Open Undeveloped Land
- Low Density Residential - R80 (Min Lot Size is 80,000 sqft)
- Medium Density Residential - R40 (Min. Lot Size is 40,000 sqft)
- Higher Density Residential - R8 (Min. Lot Size is 8,000 sqft)
- Commercial/Office
- Water

Scale 1:9,000 or 1" = 750'

750 0 750 1500 2250 3000 Feet

** For Planning Purposes Only **



Data Sources: The data for this map was supplied by the Town of Amesbury, the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, the Massachusetts Highway Department Central Transportation Planning Staff and the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs/ MassGIS (EOEA/MassGIS). This map was prepared by MVPC for Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc and the Town of Amesbury as part of the Amesbury Master Plan Series. All property parcel depictions current through 1997. The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. It may not be adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation.

A State Designated Regional Service Center
"Mapping the Crossroads of New England"
Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC)
160 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830

Printed April 15, 2002 JHW/MDF
Revised Feb. 24, 2004 MDF

MERRIMACK VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION

RKG ASSOCIATES, INC.

Wild Water International

Existing Land Use Amesbury Master Plan

Table LU-1
Land Use Code Definitions

Land Use Code	Categories
Agriculture	Cropland, Pasture and Nursery
Natural Land/Undisturbed Vegetation	Undeveloped Land, Forests and Wetlands
Public Institution and Cemeteries	Public Buildings, Schools, Cemeteries
Parks/Recreation	Public and Private Parks and Recreation, Golf, Water-based Recreation and Marinas
Mixed Use	Mix of Office/Commercial with Residential Uses
Industrial/Transportation/Mining/Landfill	Higher Intensity Industrial Related Uses and Utilities
Open Undeveloped Land	Abandoned Agriculture, Powerlines, Areas of No Vegetation
Low Density Residential	Minimum Lot Size of 80,000 sq. ft.
Medium Density Residential	Minimum Lot Size of 40,000 sq. ft.
Higher Density Residential	Minimum Lot Size of 8,000 sq. ft.
Commercial/Office	General Office, Retail, Shopping Center

Source: MassGIS- Land Use Datalayer Description, January 2002, <http://www.state.ma.us/mgis/lus.htm>

Generalized Development Patterns

Amesbury consists of approximately 8,800 acres or 13.8 square miles of land and water.¹ As shown in Table LU-2, approximately 7,912 acres or 90 percent of the land area in Amesbury is *usable* land—land that does not include streets and highways or water bodies (including lakes, ponds, streams, rivers and brooks, etc.).² A comparison of these land use categories relative to the total usable land area is shown in Figure LU-1.

It should be noted that the methodology used to calculate the usable land use areas does not take into account such elements as wetlands, rare species habitats or other environmental considerations that would limit development potential on a particular parcel. These environmental elements are currently included in the areas featured as Natural Land/Undisturbed Vegetation. Additionally, the methodology does not correspond directly with full build-out of individual parcels, but rather the percentage of the parcels that are attributed to a particular use. For example, some of the parcels along Route 110/Haverhill Road show industrial uses along the property frontage but also show natural land toward the rear of the parcels. Consequently, it could be interpreted that these parcels are underutilized and additional growth could be accommodated in some areas.

The future build-out potential for the Town of Amesbury, factoring in environmental considerations and zoning designations within particular parcel boundaries, will be discussed later in this chapter, which will include development of a Land Use Suitability Map.



¹ Town of Amesbury Assessors Office, May 14, 2003.

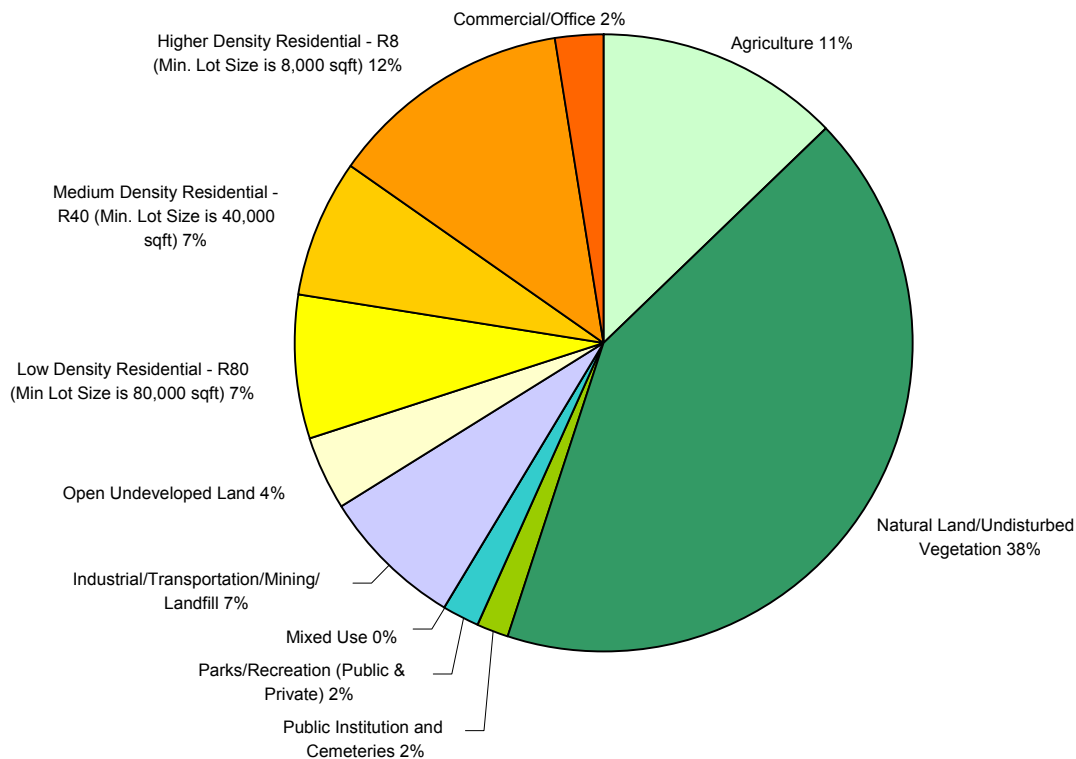
² Inventory of Existing Land Use Map and Database, Merrimac Valley Planning Commission, April 15, 2003

Table LU-2
Existing Land Use*

Land Use Code	Acres	% of Total
Agriculture	1,003.07	11%
Natural Land/Undisturbed Vegetation	3,338.97	38%
Public Institution and Cemeteries	148.45	2%
Parks/Recreation (Public and Private)	152.14	2%
Mixed Use	6.11	.007%
Industrial/Transportation/Mining/Landfill	575.63	7%
Open Undeveloped Land	315.64	4%
Low Density Residential	587.86	7%
Medium Density Residential	576.03	7%
Higher Density Residential	1,017.84	12%
Commercial/Office	191.22	2%
Total	7,912.96	100%

* Land use calculations do not include streets and highways or water bodies within Amesbury.

Figure LU-1
Existing Land Use, Percent of Total Area



Of the land use in Amesbury, approximately 2,955 acres, or 37 percent, is classified as developed land, comprised of residential, commercial and industrial uses.

Undeveloped lands, which include agricultural uses, natural land, parks and recreation, and public spaces account for approximately 4,960 acres or 63 percent of the total land area in Amesbury. It should be noted that the undeveloped land percentages includes both protected and unprotected open space areas. The Open Space & Natural Resources Map included in the Natural Resources Element of this Master Plan specifies the agricultural and open space/conservation land areas in Amesbury that are protected through different regulatory or public and private ownership initiatives.

Residential Development

Residential uses comprise approximately 2,180 acres or 28 percent of the total developed land in Amesbury. Table LU-3 provides a break down of the percentages of residential land use by category.

Table LU-3
Residential Land Use

Type of Residential Use	Percent of Residential Total
Higher Density Residential (min. lot size 8,000 sq. ft.)	47%
Medium Density Residential (min. lot size 40,000 sq. ft.)	26%
Low Density Residential (min. lot size 80,000 sq. ft.)	27%
Total	100%

The majority of the higher density residential uses in Amesbury are concentrated in established neighborhoods in and around the central downtown area, with pockets of higher density single-family uses surrounding Lake Attitash (clusters of seasonal homes, with a significant number that are anecdotally reported as being converted to year-round residences) and along the Merrimack River in the Point Shore and Ferry District neighborhoods. While a number of the multi-family uses are in close proximity to the downtown area, a significant number of newer apartment/condominiums and townhouse developments are in outlying areas, most visibly along Whitehall Road, South Hampton Road and Pleasant Valley Road.

A significant percentage of lower density single-family uses line the major roadways that form the spokes from the village center area, with newer cluster subdivisions and smaller neighborhood areas adjacent to these corridors. Older established low to medium density neighborhoods are most prevalent in vicinity of Market Street, Lions Mouth Road, Kimball Road and Lake Attitash Road.

Commercial and Industrial Development

Commercial uses comprise approximately 200 acres or two percent of the total land area in Amesbury. The categorization for commercial uses includes a wide range of uses including mixed use, retail, office, restaurants, personal services and automotive. Virtually all of the commercial uses in Amesbury are located in close proximity to the downtown area and along the Route 110 corridor. As discussed earlier, commercial uses along Route 110 in the vicinity of the interchange between I-95 and I-495 are much more automobile-oriented and commercial “strip” development, characterized by convenience oriented retail and fast-food/chain restaurants with large parking areas. Commercial uses within the downtown area (including Main Street and Elm Street) include smaller office, retail or restaurant uses as typically found in smaller downtown areas. The Elm Street corridor also includes several automotive uses and gas stations, and neighborhood-serving convenience retail uses.

Approximately seven percent of the land in Amesbury, approximately 575 acres, is classified as industrial, defined to include manufacturing, landfills, utilities and transportation services. A high concentration of the industrial uses are located in the historic mill buildings in and adjacent to the central downtown area, primarily in the Lower Millyard and Carriage Hill. Larger industrial facilities are located in the Amesbury Industrial Park on Monroe Street, along the western end of Route 110/Haverhill Road and along Hunt Road.

Underutilized Areas

As noted earlier, when comparing the parcel coverage to the land use allocations on the Existing Land Use Inventory Map, some parcels with commercial or industrial uses along the property frontage also show natural land toward the rear of the property. This is most prevalent along Route 110/Haverhill Road, and also in the Golden Triangle (a land area formed by Elm Street, Route 110, and Interstates 95 and 495). Additionally, the redevelopment of certain areas of Amesbury has lagged behind others. These include, among others, the Lower Millyard, the Route 110 corridor and the Clinton Street area. When compared to the zoning for these areas, it could be interpreted that these parcels could accommodate additional growth, and consequently they could be considered to be underutilized.

There are a variety of reasons for the underutilization of land in Amesbury, potentially including market forces (demand), fractured ownership, inconsistent zoning, environmental constraints, unwillingness or inability of owners to invest in their properties, as well as a lack of a clear vision for the future. The goal of this master planning process is to develop specific goals and objectives for these underutilized parts of the community.

Brownfields

The term 'brownfield site' applies to properties where expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Amesbury has historic contaminated brownfields, modern contaminated brownfields and also asbestos and lead contamination in older homes. Many of these chemicals lie in soils below the buildings, and some are in the water table. Some of the brownfields are soluble, others inert, and they pose various threats to redevelopment, depending on contaminant type and location, and the reuse of the property. The risks associated with different uses are detailed in the Massachusetts Contingency Plan, which outlines detailed steps necessary to remediate contamination by achieving a permanent response action outcome (RAO).

Historic contamination

The majority of Amesbury's brownfield sites reflect a 400 year history of manufacturing around the Powow, Back and Merrimack Rivers. Historic zones of manufacturing and industry are generally located where factory buildings and railroads were built, including the Lower Millyard, Upper Millyard, Cedar Street, Oak Street, Mill Street, Patton's Hollow on Main Street and the Hat Factory on Merrimac Street. Historic industries used tar, creosote, coal power, mercury and other chemicals to tan hide, press felt and weave rope.

Modern Brownfields

While many sites and buildings have suspected brownfield contamination, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) only lists sites where a release of oil or hazardous material has been reported to them. Many of these releases are gasoline or oil spills. The DEP site (www.state.ma.us/cgi-bin/dep/wscreport.cgi) lists 74 records of sites in Amesbury, which is provided in the Appendix. In addition to the contaminated sites, landfills in Amesbury are also considered to be contaminated.

Brownfield sites are usually Tier Classified using a numerical ranking system. Tier 1A sites are the most contaminated, and Amesbury only has one Tier 1A site: the former Microfab property at 106 Haverhill Road. Tier 1B sites are the next level of classification, and Amesbury has two Tier 1B sites: the Bailey Pond parcel at 77 Merrimac Street, and Bartley Machine at 35 Water Street. Tier 1D sites are generally sites where required paperwork was not received by a DEP deadline, and the Merrimac Hat Factory is listed with a Tier 1D classification. Tier 2 sites are the least contaminated, and the Nichols yard on Railroad Avenue in the Lower Millyard, the Titcomb landfill, and the Cumberland Farms at 241 Main Street are Tier 2 sites. The 36 High Street/Pond Street site is the location of lead contamination which was remediated in the fall of 2003 and will be closed out.

Agricultural and Natural Lands

The approximately 4,950 acres of land categorized as Agricultural, Natural Land/Undisturbed Vegetation, Parks/Recreation (Public and Private) and Open Undeveloped comprises approximately 63 percent of the land area in Amesbury. It should be noted that the methodology used to identify these land uses (interpretation from aerial photography) provides a context where distinguishing between these different types of uses may not be completely accurate (i.e. vacant/open lands and agricultural uses can appear to be somewhat similar). As noted earlier, agricultural and open space/conservation lands that are protected through regulatory or public/private ownership initiatives are identified on the Open Space & Natural Resources Map included in the Natural Resources Element, and are discussed in detail in the Town of Amesbury Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2002 – 2006. The Recreation and Open Space Inventory from the 2002 Open Space and Recreation Plan is included in the Appendix. The unprotected agricultural and natural lands in Amesbury do, however, constitute areas where future land use planning is critical in terms of identification of lands to be preserved and where future development will be appropriate.

Amesbury Neighborhoods

Amesbury is composed of many distinct neighborhood districts that have grown out of various periods in the Town's history, and which reflect particular historical and geographic characteristics and styles. In the Town of Amesbury Preservation Plan 25 distinct neighborhood areas have been identified, which when observed either individually or in groupings, provides the framework that is the combination of larger open areas along with the historical village center that portrays Amesbury's quality of life. The following sections summarize distinct neighborhood areas as described in the Preservation Plan.



Downtown Amesbury

Amesbury's downtown core is highly reflective of the Town's mill heritage, with its high concentration of economic and civic architecture, including manufacturing, retail, civic and religious buildings. The historic mill buildings adjacent to the rivers provide a context of the Town's manufacturing roots and the maritime economy, and are a well-preserved example of the classical small New England industrial center. As described elsewhere in this chapter, the recent initiatives to promote redevelopment in the downtown area, especially the Upper and Lower Millyards and the redevelopment of many commercial buildings, is necessary for the downtown to "reinvent" itself. For the downtown area to retain the vitality it is historically known for, continued efforts are needed to foster a mixed use environment in order to maintain a critical mass of activity in the center.



Point Shore District

Located south of Macy Street/Route 110 between Main Street and the Town Boundary on the east, the Point Shore District long the Merrimack River has the feel and quality of a mercantile village of the pre-industrial area. The neighborhood is very linear in shape, with most of its residences facing south towards the river along Main Street. The river side of Main Street was reserved for commercial uses relating to the river, including boatyards and fishing docks. Many of the residences date from the 1700's, and there are relatively few modern intrusions. Lowell's Boat Shop, with its continued operations of boat making activities, provides a direct connection with the commercial activity that was the source of the Point Shore neighborhood's origin.



Ferry District

The Ferry District is located south of Macy Street/Route 110 between Route 150 and Main Street, with a southern border along the Merrimack River. The neighborhood is home to many historic structures and sites in Amesbury and is highly reflective of the Town's heritage for shipbuilding, farming, cottage industries and the Industrial Revolution. The neighborhood features such sites as the Bartlett Museum, Bailey's Pond, the Merrimack Hat Company and the Union, Bartlett and St. Joseph Cemeteries. The neighborhood is bisected by Interstate 495, which presents challenges in terms of historic preservation initiatives to promote integration of the multitude of historic structures and sites within the Ferry District.



Lion's Mouth Road and Outlying Agricultural Districts

The most prevalent aspects of the Lion's Mouth Road neighborhood, and other outlying districts, is the agricultural character primarily emphasized by Woodsom Farm.



In-Town Neighborhoods,

The neighborhoods which surround the downtown core, including The Highlands, Town Park, Powow Hill, Market Street, Congress Street, Brown Hill, Brick Yard, Middle School and Elm Street, Amesbury's in-town Highlands, Carriage Hill and Po Hill.

Current Zoning

Amesbury's zoning map, adopted August 8, 2002 contains a total of 16 zoning districts in addition to several overlay, conservation and protection districts focused on specific areas of Town. A listing of the zoning districts and minimum lot sizes is provided in Table LU-4.

Permitted uses within each of the zoning districts and dimensional and density regulations for building sizes and yard areas are set forth within the Zoning Bylaw. The bylaw includes five specific residential districts (R8, R20, R40, R80 and RC), with housing also allowed in the PUD (Planned Unit Development) zone under certain conditions as well as in the CBD (Central Business District). Of the standard development zones, eight districts (CBD, C, RCZD, DAD, OP, IL, IC and I) include non-residential uses as a major land use component, with the PUD district allowing limited supporting commercial uses.

In addition to the conventional zoning districts, the Town of Amesbury has additional zoning controls, Neighborhood Conservation Districts (for the Brown Hill Neighborhood) and overlay district regulations (Health Care, Elm Street and Hunt Road) to promote land development patterns that preserve its New England village character. These regulations are intended to guide growth and development to appropriate areas of the town and to promote efficient management of where extension of public utility systems would be needed.



Zoning History

Prior to 1971, Amesbury did not have zoning in place to regulate land use development, which resulted in scattered development, incompatible adjoining land uses and sprawl along the Town's roadway network. The zoning map adopted in 1971 essentially subdivided the Town into a limited number of subdistricts, and except for large areas of land zoned industrial along Route 495, the map reflected existing land uses. The zoning regulations put in place essentially resulted in a community that no longer reflected the diversity of the original residential and commercial activities, nor did it provide the Town with sufficient regulation to guide and control growth or assure quality development. The zoning would have allowed a level of potential growth that would have significantly changed the character of the community and required considerable investment for public services.

**Table LU-4
Amesbury Zoning Districts**

District	Abbreviation	Minimum Lot Area
Residence 8	R-8	8,000 sq. ft.
Residence 20	R-20	20,000 sq. ft.
Residence 40	R-40	40,000 sq. ft.
Residence 80	R-80	80,000 sq. ft.
Rural Cluster	RC	10 acres
Planned Unit Development	PUD	5 acres
Central Business District	CBD	5,000 sq. ft.
Commercial	C	20,000 sq. ft.
Regional Commercial Zoning District	RCZD	2 acres
Office Park	OP	2.5 acres
Light Industrial	IL	10 acres
Central Industrial	IC	40,000 sq. ft.
Industrial	I	40,000 sq. ft.
Open Space Conservancy	OSC	5 acres
Elm Street Overlay District	ESOD	40,000 sq. ft.
Wetlands and Floodplain*	W/F	
Hunt Road Overlay District*	HROD	
Water Resources Protection District*	WRPD	
Brown Hill Neighborhood Conservation District*	BHOD	
Downtown Artist Live/Work District*	DAD	

* Within these Overlay Districts, the underlying uses and dimensional regulations are permitted provided that development meets additional requirements specified in other sections of the Zoning Bylaw.
Source: Town of Amesbury Zoning Map and Bylaw, August 8, 2000.

Sustainability

In 1985 the Town modified some of its existing zoning districts to minimize the potential for growth, thereby maintaining the desired development pattern of centralized compact developed areas served by utilities, and conserving the open space and low density feel of outlying areas. The intent was to create a more sustainable pattern of development: to encourage growth and redevelopment in the downtown core and along the existing already developed major roadways; to limit development in outlying areas of town to protect and preserve key natural features; and, to maximize the Town's ability to provide utilities and infrastructure to areas determined feasible and desirable for new growth and development. The objectives of the zoning modifications were to reduce allowable densities and maintain rural character in outlying areas, encourage development in the existing development centers and corridors, and to increase commercial development opportunities in locations that relate to the interstate highway system.

Changes to the residential zoning districts included limiting the existing R-20 zone (20,000 sq. ft. minimum lot size) to areas that were currently serviced by public sewer. The R-30 zone (minimum lot size of 30,000 sq. ft.) was located in three outlying areas of Amesbury and was eliminated in favor of lower density residential zones. The previous R-20 and R-30 zones made up a large portion of developable land in town. The potential density of development would have required extension of water and sewer service, as well as possible upgrading of the sewer treatment facilities, and additional schools. The R-40 and R-80 zones (40,000 and 80,000 sq. ft. minimum lot sizes respectively) were established in unsewered areas to reduce the overall development density, thereby reducing potential for overtaxing existing utility systems and extending services to outlying areas.

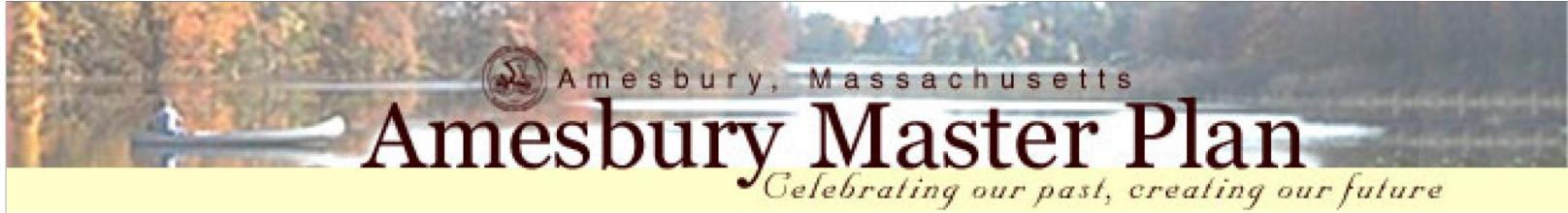
At the same time, the Town adopted a Cluster Residential (RC) Special Permit applicable in the R-20, R-40, R-80 and IL districts. The RC district mandates 10,000 sq. ft. minimum lot sizes in exchange for 50 percent of the tract to be set aside as common open space. Additional incentives allow for density bonuses of up to 20 percent for dedication of additional open space.

Along with the revisions to the regulatory structure to regulate growth in outlying areas, the Town has invested substantial funds and used non-regulatory programs to protect certain properties in outlying areas. As outlined in the *Town of Amesbury Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2002-2006*, (OSRP) key parcels in outlying areas have been targeted for protection by the Town either through acquisition, conservation restrictions or agricultural preservation initiatives. Key parcels identified in the OSRP are provided in the Appendix and are shown on the Open Space inventory map in the Natural Resources Element of this Master Plan.

In 1999, the Town adopted Design Guidelines administered by the Planning Board and Design Review Committee in an effort to enhance and extend Amesbury's image as a traditional New England town with a valuable architectural heritage. The Design Review Committee and the Planning Board use the list of Architectural Design Criteria when reviewing applications for new development and renovations to ensure that the projects are compatible with surrounding properties and maintain the character of the town.

The Town has also instituted the Neighborhood Conservation zoning district, designed to encourage neighborhood-specific planning and protect sensitive cultural, environmental or historic resources. The first such district was established in the Brown Hill neighborhood in 2002. Other overlay districts, including the Hunt Road Overlay District, the Elm Street Overlay District, the Health Care Overlay District and the Downtown Artists Live/Work District, provide additional regulations to promote desired land uses and development patterns for those specific areas.

A history of Amesbury's land use patterns since 1971 are seen in the land use maps for 1971, 1985 and 1991 on the following pages. Potential buildout under current zoning is shown on the Future Land Use at Buildout map.

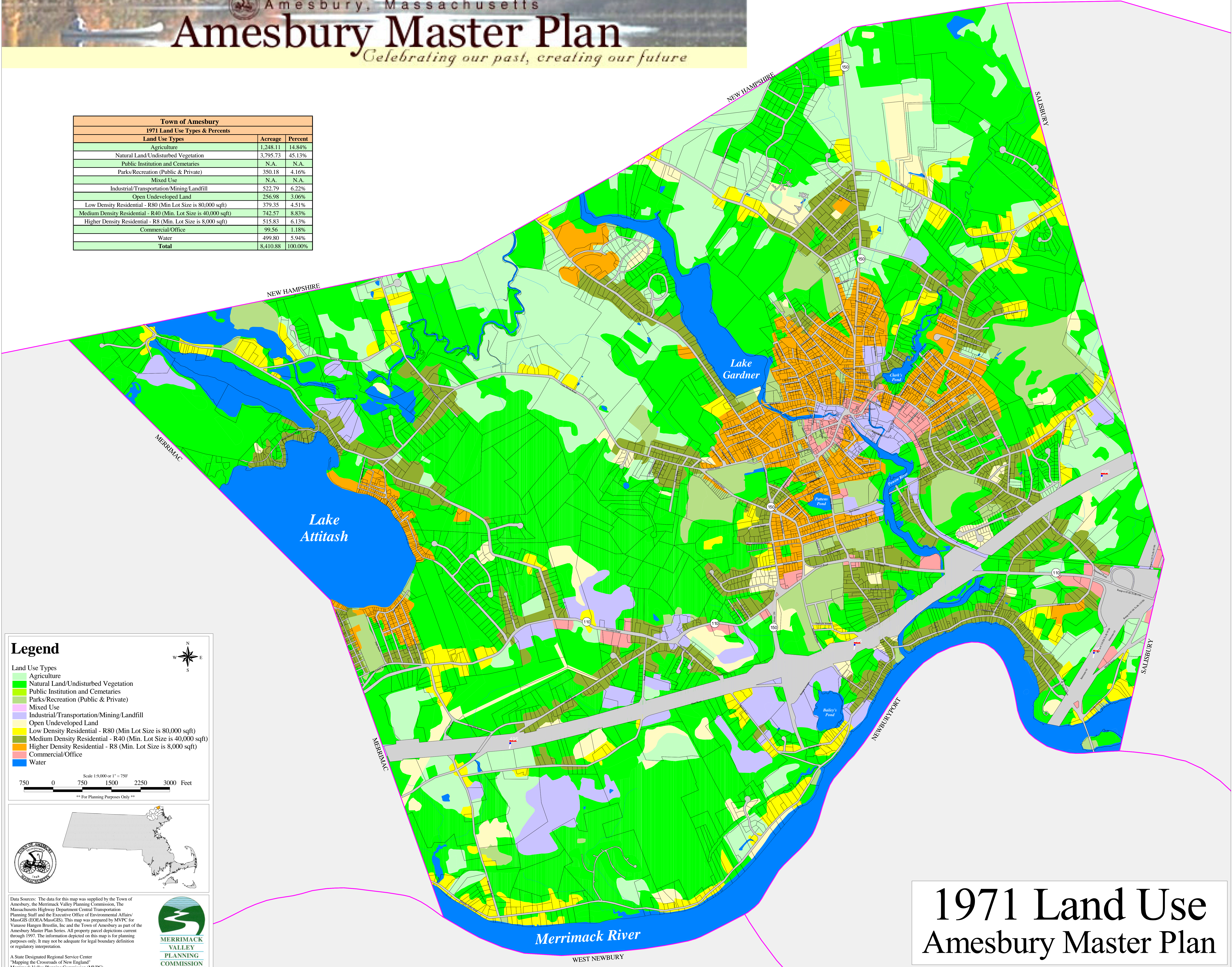


Amesbury, Massachusetts

Amesbury Master Plan

Celebrating our past, creating our future

Town of Amesbury		
1971 Land Use Types & Percents		
Land Use Types	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	1,248.11	14.84%
Natural Land/Undisturbed Vegetation	3,795.73	45.13%
Public Institution and Cemeteries	N.A.	N.A.
Parks/Recreation (Public & Private)	350.18	4.16%
Mixed Use	N.A.	N.A.
Industrial/Transportation/Mining/Landfill	522.79	6.22%
Open Undeveloped Land	256.98	3.06%
Low Density Residential - R80 (Min Lot Size is 80,000 sqft)	379.35	4.51%
Medium Density Residential - R40 (Min. Lot Size is 40,000 sqft)	742.57	8.83%
Higher Density Residential - R8 (Min. Lot Size is 8,000 sqft)	515.83	6.13%
Commercial/Office	99.56	1.18%
Water	499.80	5.94%
Total	8,410.88	100.00%



Legend

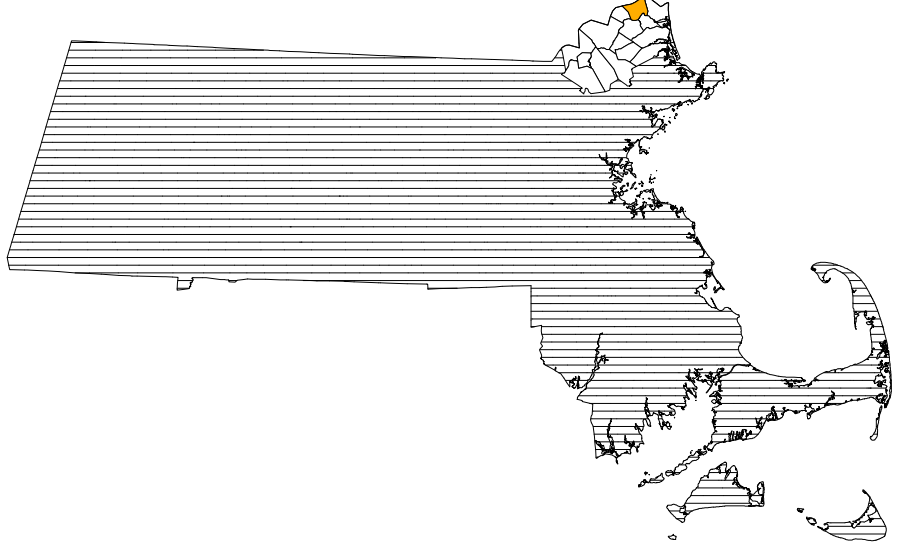
Land Use Types

- Agriculture
- Natural Land/Undisturbed Vegetation
- Public Institution and Cemeteries
- Parks/Recreation (Public & Private)
- Mixed Use
- Industrial/Transportation/Mining/Landfill
- Open Undeveloped Land
- Low Density Residential - R80 (Min Lot Size is 80,000 sqft)
- Medium Density Residential - R40 (Min. Lot Size is 40,000 sqft)
- Higher Density Residential - R8 (Min. Lot Size is 8,000 sqft)
- Commercial/Office
- Water

Scale 1:9,000 or 1" = 750'

750 0 750 1500 2250 3000 Feet

** For Planning Purposes Only **



Seal of the Town of Amesbury, Massachusetts

Data Sources: The data for this map was supplied by the Town of Amesbury, the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, the Massachusetts Highway Department Central Transportation Planning Staff and the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs/ MassGIS (EOEA/MassGIS). This map was prepared by MVPC for Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. and the Town of Amesbury as part of the Amesbury Master Plan Series. All property parcel depictions current through 1997. The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. It may not be adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation.

A State Designated Regional Service Center
"Mapping the Crossroads of New England"
Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC)
160 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830


Printed July 10, 2003 MDP
Revised Feb. 24, 2004 MDP

MERRIMACK VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION

RKG ASSOCIATES, INC.

Wild Water International

1971 Land Use
Amesbury Master Plan





Amesbury, Massachusetts

Amesbury Master Plan

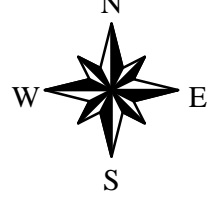
Celebrating our past, creating our future

Town of Amesbury		
1985 Land Use Types & Percents		
Land Use Types	Acreage	Percent
Agriculture	1,163.18	13.83%
Natural Land/Undisturbed Vegetation	3,592.72	42.72%
Public Institution and Cemeteries	147.09	1.75%
Parks/Recreation (Public & Private)	320.05	3.81%
Mixed Use	N.A.	N.A.
Industrial/Transportation/Mining/Landfill	616.09	7.32%
Open Undeveloped Land	196.19	2.33%
Low Density Residential - R80 (Min Lot Size is 80,000 sqft)	421.53	5.01%
Medium Density Residential - R40 (Min. Lot Size is 40,000 sqft)	791.46	9.41%
Higher Density Residential - R8 (Min. Lot Size is 8,000 sqft)	535.94	6.37%
Commercial/Office	126.83	1.51%
Water	499.80	5.94%
Total	8,410.88	100.00%

Legend

Land Use Types

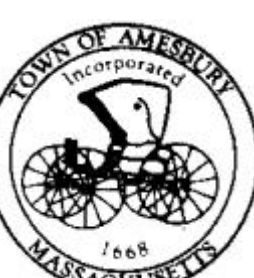
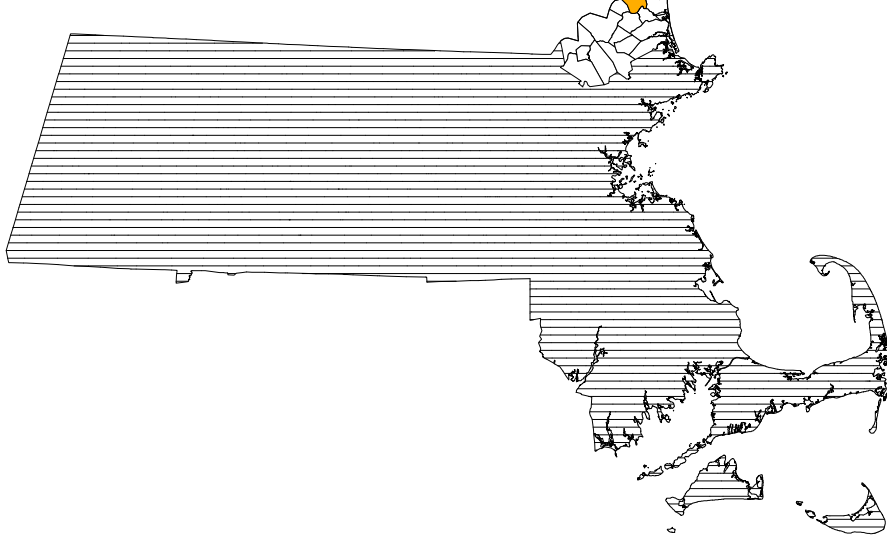
- Agriculture
- Natural Land/Undisturbed Vegetation
- Public Institution and Cemeteries
- Parks/Recreation (Public & Private)
- Mixed Use
- Industrial/Transportation/Mining/Landfill
- Open Undeveloped Land
- Low Density Residential - R80 (Min Lot Size is 80,000 sqft)
- Medium Density Residential - R40 (Min. Lot Size is 40,000 sqft)
- Higher Density Residential - R8 (Min. Lot Size is 8,000 sqft)
- Commercial/Office
- Water



Scale 1:9,000 or 1" = 750'

750 0 750 1500 2250 3000 Feet


** For Planning Purposes Only **





Data Sources: The data for this map was supplied by the Town of Amesbury, the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, the Massachusetts Highway Department Central Transportation Planning Staff and the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs/ MassGIS (EOEA/MassGIS). This map was prepared by MVPC for Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc and the Town of Amesbury as part of the Amesbury Master Plan Series. All property parcel depictions current through 1997. The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. It may not be adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation.

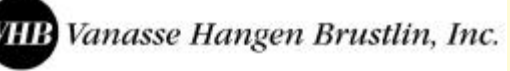
A State Designated Regional Service Center
"Mapping the Crossroads of New England"
Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC)
160 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830

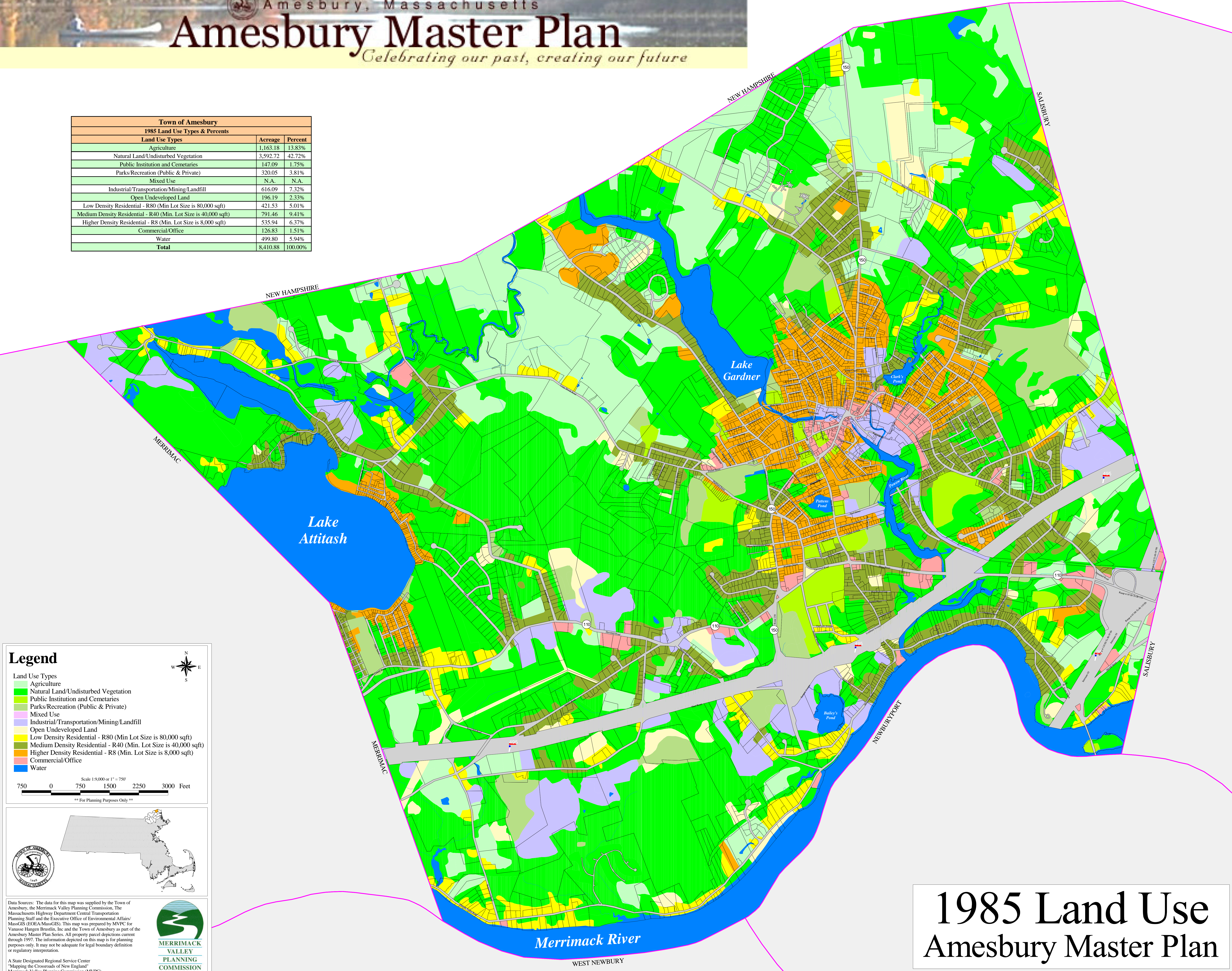
Printed July 10 2003 MDF
Revised Feb. 22 2004 MDF

**MERRIMACK VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION**

**RKG ASSOCIATES, INC.**

Wild Water International

Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.



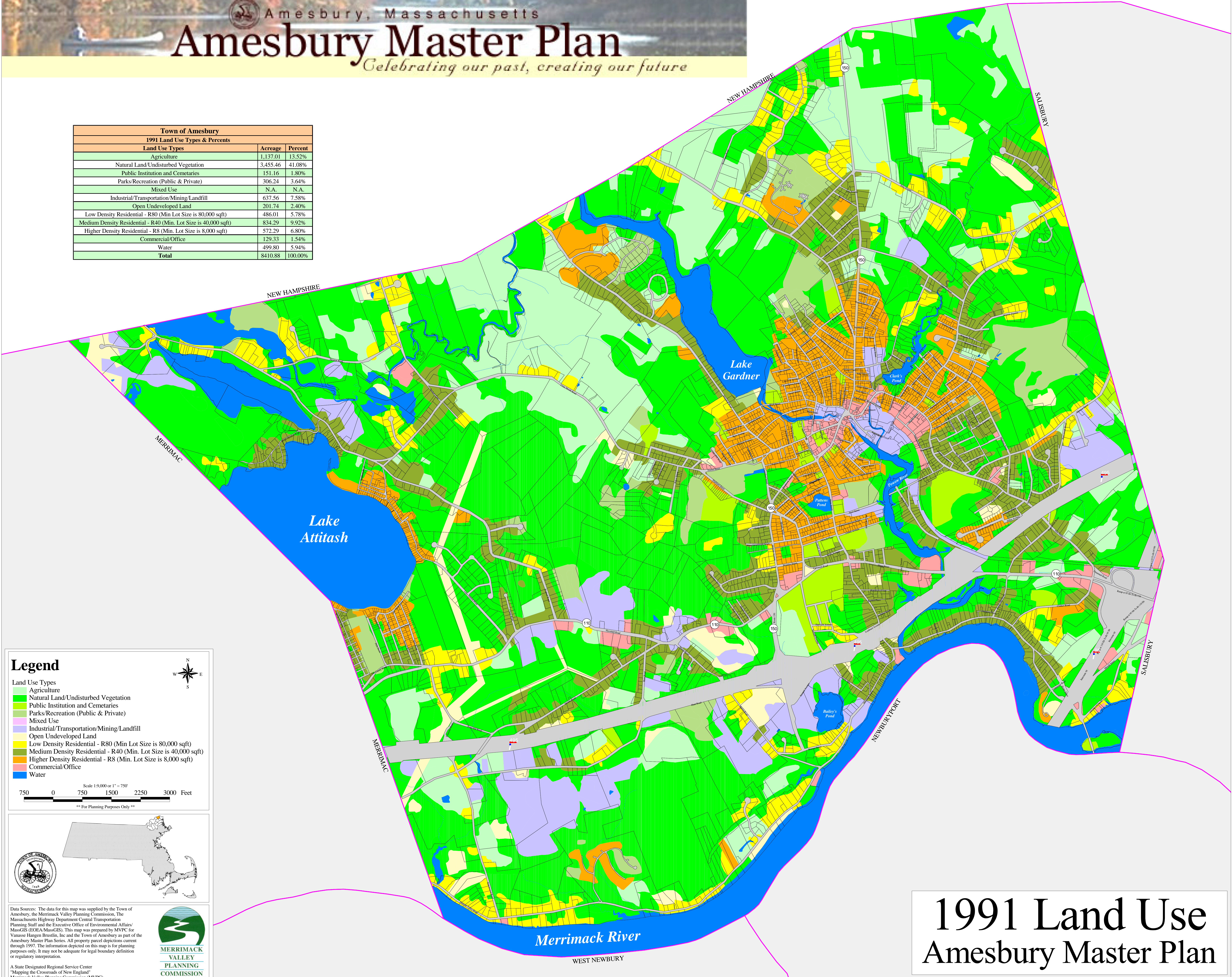
1985 Land Use
Amesbury Master Plan



Amesbury Master Plan

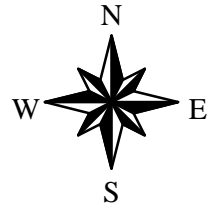
Celebrating our past, creating our future

Town of Amesbury		
1991 Land Use Types & Percents		
Land Use Types	Acreage	Percent
Agriculture	1,137.01	13.52%
Natural Land/Undisturbed Vegetation	3,455.46	41.08%
Public Institution and Cemeteries	151.16	1.80%
Parks/Recreation (Public & Private)	306.24	3.64%
Mixed Use	N.A.	N.A.
Industrial/Transportation/Mining/Landfill	637.56	7.58%
Open Undeveloped Land	201.74	2.40%
Low Density Residential - R80 (Min Lot Size is 80,000 sqft)	486.01	5.78%
Medium Density Residential - R40 (Min. Lot Size is 40,000 sqft)	834.29	9.92%
Higher Density Residential - R8 (Min. Lot Size is 8,000 sqft)	572.29	6.80%
Commercial/Office	129.33	1.54%
Water	499.80	5.94%
Total	8410.88	100.00%



Legend

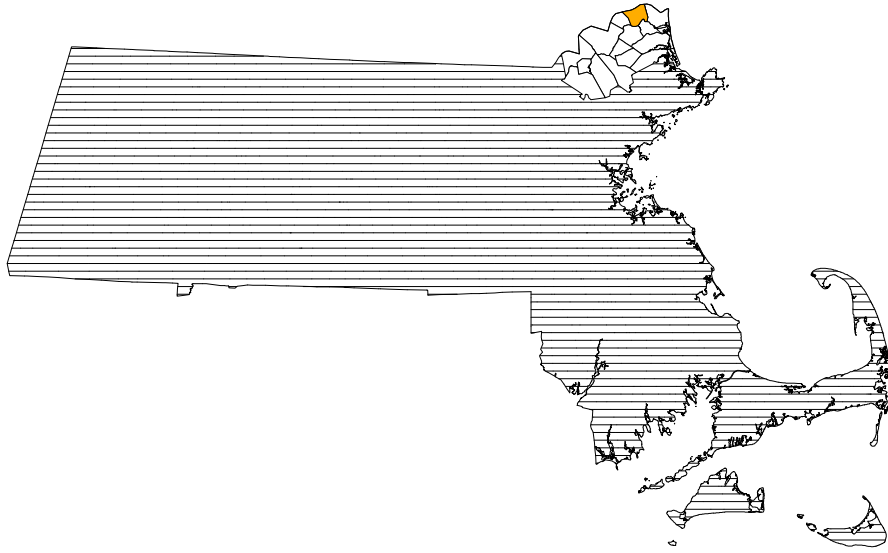
- Land Use Types
- Agriculture
 - Natural Land/Undisturbed Vegetation
 - Public Institution and Cemeteries
 - Parks/Recreation (Public & Private)
 - Mixed Use
 - Industrial/Transportation/Mining/Landfill
 - Open Undeveloped Land
 - Low Density Residential - R80 (Min Lot Size is 80,000 sqft)
 - Medium Density Residential - R40 (Min. Lot Size is 40,000 sqft)
 - Higher Density Residential - R8 (Min. Lot Size is 8,000 sqft)
 - Commercial/Office
 - Water



Scale 1:9,000 or 1" = 750'

750 0 750 1500 2250 3000 Feet

** For Planning Purposes Only **



Data Sources: The data for this map was supplied by the Town of Amesbury, the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, the Massachusetts Highway Department Central Transportation Planning Staff and the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs/ MassGIS (EOEA/MassGIS). This map was prepared by MVPC for Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. and the Town of Amesbury as part of the Amesbury Master Plan Series. All property parcel depictions current through 1997. The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. It may not be adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation.

A State Designated Regional Service Center
"Mapping the Crossroads of New England"
Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC)
160 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830

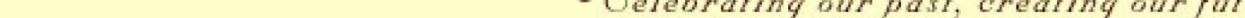


Printed July 17, 2003 MDJ
Revised Feb. 24, 2004 MDJ















Wild Water International

1991 Land Use Amesbury Master Plan

A banner for the Amesbury Master Plan. It features a background image of a river with a person in a canoe. The text "Amesbury, Massachusetts" is in a small, dark font. Below it, "Amesbury Master Plan" is written in a large, bold, serif font. At the bottom, the tagline "Celebrating our past, creating our future" is written in a smaller, italicized serif font. A small circular logo is positioned to the left of the town name.

Legend

-  Underutilized Parcels*
 Redevelopment Area
 Developable Land
 General Business
 Commercial
 General Industrial
 Light Industrial
 Office Park, Health Care, Institutional
 Mixed Use
 Residential: 80k+ sq ft / Agricultural
 Residential: 40-80k sq ft
 Residential: 20-40k sq ft
 Residential: 8-20k sq ft & Two- and Multi-family

Scale 1:9,000 or 1" = 750'

750 0 750 1500 2250 3000 Feet

* Recognized as adding to build-out, but not included in calculations for new uses on vacant lands.



Data Sources: The data for this map was supplied by the Town of Amesbury, the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, The Massachusetts Highway Department Central Transportation Planning Staff and the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs/ MassGIS (EOEA/MassGIS). This map was prepared by MVPCC for Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. and the Town of Amesbury as part of the Amesbury Master Plan Series. All property parcel depictions current through 1997. The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. It may not be adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation.

A State Designated Regional Service Center
"Mapping the Crossroads of New England"
Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (M)
160 Main Street, Haverhill MA, 01830

J:\Arcview\Amesbury\0418.apr\Future Land Use under Buildout



April 15 2003 LJW/MDF
Revised July 11 2003 MDF

[illegible][illegible]

Buildout Methodology

The residential analysis is used to determine developable land area for the building, commercial and industrial zoning districts. Digital and hard copy data was collected. Digital zoning data was updated. Existing digital data was gathered from a variety of sources including MassGIS, the community, and the U.S. Geological Survey. The data included land parcels, open space, land use, hydrography, environmentally sensitive areas, wetlands, Rivers Protection Act buffers, flood zones, slope, soil topography, railroads, road networks, and political boundaries were utilized to varying degrees. Additional layers were created that included miscellaneous features determined to be undevelopable, an update of the most recent MacConnell Land Use, and subdivisions that were approved or built since 1990.

The developed land data is from the aggregated land use categories in the MacConnell Land Use layer provided by MassGIS. The aggregated developed land categories are spectator and water-based recreation, residential, commercial, industrial uses, transportation, and waste disposal.

The GIS analysis consisted of subtracting layers from each zoning district. The remaining developable land area represented on MAP 2 is aggregated by zoning category.

To determine the number of future buildable residential lots by zoning district, a formula was developed to ascertain the land requirements of a typical lot in each district. The land requirements include minimum lot size, estimated road area (required frontage multiplied by half the right-of-way), and an additional 10% to cover miscellaneous variables such as odd lot shapes. Environmental limitations, such as the Rivers Protection Act Buffer, wetlands and 100-Year floodplain areas were also taken into account.

Commercial and industrial buildable lots were determined using an "effective" floor area ratio. For each commercial and industrial zoning district, the major alternative land uses were examined in relation to height limitations, maximum allowable percent lot coverage, open space requirements, and parking regulations. An effective floor area ratio (FAR) for all use categories (e.g., offices, warehouses) in a particular district was developed for analysis purposes. The effective FAR for vacant space within the entire district was estimated by averaging the FARs for the various potential land use types. Limits placed on the total square footage of a building because of environmental constraints was factored into the equations.

For some communities a redevelopment analysis was conducted to examine the potential for redevelopment of various areas of the community. Under this methodology, the total potential floor area for the entire district was calculated rather than vacant space as prescribed by the standard methodology. This redevelopment analysis was conducted for the following communities: Amesbury, Haverhill, Lawrence, Methuen, and Newburyport.

Town of Amesbury		
Redevelopment Area		
Land Type	Acreage	Percentage
Redevelopment	1,009.83	78.99%
Natural Lands*	268.64	21.01%
Total	1,278.46	100%

* Natural Lands include Wetlands, River

Protection Act (0-100ft). Hydrographic

features and Permeantly Protected Open

Features, and Permanently Protected Open

Space

1

End

Land

Letter C

Amochury, I

Amesbury

Future Land Use at Buildout

Amesbury Master Plan

With the initiatives since 1985, the Town has created a framework to limit what could have been unlimited “sprawl” development patterns, with significant residential subdivisions in outlying areas. The end result is that the current zoning map for Amesbury now reflects both the diversity of uses and the historical land development patterns of the community. Higher density residential uses are permitted primarily around the commercial and industrial uses permitted in and adjacent to downtown, forming the basis of the traditional village center development pattern. Commercial (C) and Regional Commercial Zoning District (RCZD) uses are permitted along the Route 110 corridor in the vicinity of the I-95 and I-495 interchange, with the industrial zoning districts also located in these areas with easy access to regional transportation networks. Lower density residential districts and Open Space Conservancy (OSC) primarily comprise the outlying areas of Amesbury, thereby limiting development outside of the village center area.

Smart Growth Housing Bylaw

In 2000, Amesbury enacted a rate of development bylaw which limits the number of new houses that can be built during the year. The intent of the bylaw is to ensure that housing growth occurs in an orderly manner and that adequate municipal services can be provided to support new and existing development. The bylaw seeks to preserve and enhance the unique cultural, environmental and historic resources in the community by encouraging infill and adaptive reuse within the existing urbanized area while preserving rural open space with cluster subdivision design.

The permit allocation bylaw, currently being extended and revised by the Municipal Council, limits the annual number of building permits to 48 new dwelling units, including 12 single units/lots and 36 multi-family units in a given year. Applicants are awarded points for development proposals that meet a stated list of criteria, with permits awarded to those applications that receive the highest number of points.

One of the key elements of the bylaw is to provide the Town with reasonable time and opportunity to study the effect of housing growth and to guard against short term patterns that may be inconsistent or impede effective implementation of this Master Plan. As will be shown in later sections of this chapter, new development has significantly decreased since the inception of the Permit Allocation Bylaw, going from a high of 68 new single-family units in 1997, to a low of 27 new units in 2001.

Land Use Trends 1997-2004

Development in Amesbury has been facilitated such that it encourages and supports the protection of open space, scenic landscapes and critical environmental resources. The focus of regulatory measures has been to raise the quality of life, protect historic resources, and preserve the unique character of Amesbury as a New England Town.

Current zoning bylaws have been framed to achieve multiple objectives and to shape desired growth. They encourage revitalization of old mill buildings and their re-use for residential and commercial purposes. Higher densities in residential development in the heart of Amesbury are allowed through multi family conversions and other mixed uses. Residential development in new subdivisions focuses on clustering the units and preserving large contiguous areas of the parcels for open space and trail networks. Density bonuses are given for leaving more areas as protected open space and protecting other natural and historic resources on critical parcels. Development with over 25 percent of affordable housing units are given relief from the restricted number of building permits in a year to encourage developers to increase the affordable housing stock in the town. Higher design standards have been established to maintain the character of distinct neighborhoods and to prevent negative impact from suburban sprawl and cookie cutter subdivisions.

The following sections provide an overview of land use trends in the past several years, demonstrating efforts the Town has taken to shape development patterns in line with their smart growth objectives.

New Homes and Subdivisions

According to data provided by the Amesbury's Assessors Office, a total of 280 new single family homes were constructed in between January 1997 and December 2002,³ an average of 47 new single-family homes per year. Available data for new construction is based on the year that permits were issued; actual data of construction dates were not available. A break down of the number of new single-family homes permitted by year is shown in Table LU-5. Of these new homes, 158 units have been constructed in new subdivisions of three or more units, most notably the Pond Hill subdivision which consists of 68 new housing units. Subdivisions permitted for four or more units are detailed in Table LU-6.



³ The scope of work to develop this Master Plan, dated December 2003, specifies updates for land use patterns up to the end of 2002.

Table LU-5
New Single Family Housing Units

Year	Number of Units
1997	68
1998	60
1999	36
2000	47
2001	27
2002	42
Average Units per year	47

Source: Amesbury Assessor's Office.

Table LU-6
Single-Family Subdivisions Since 1997

Subdivision Name	Number of Units	Year Built*
Pond Hill Subdivision	68	1997-2001
Amidon Avenue	4	1998-2002
Cedar Street	6	1997
Jordan Lane	6	1997
Pinewood Road	9	1997
Goss Avenue	8	1998
Oakland Street	9	1998
Dublin Street	7	1999
Cedar Street	4	2000
Jacqueline Drive	5	2000
Kimball Road	10	2000
Madison Street	4	2000
Country Club Estates	7	2002
Olde Taverne Lane	11	2002

* Approximate year built based upon dates permits were issued.

Source: Amesbury Assessor's Office.

Multi-Family Developments

According to staff from the Office of Community and Economic Development, 234 new multi-family units were added to the Town of Amesbury's housing stock between 1997 and 2002. Similar to single-family housing, this averages approximately 47 units per year. Table LU-7 provides a listing of these new multi-family developments and the number of units within each project.

Table LU-7
Multi-Family Developments Since 1997*

Development	Number of Units
Oak Street Mill Conversion	85
Hat Factory	80
Upper Millyard	46
Wojcicki	8
Solari	7
Satenstein	5
Terry's Liquors	3

* Source: Office of Community and Economic Development
 Date of development or permitting not provided.

Multi-Family Conversions

According to the Amesbury Assessors Office, between 1996 and 2002, approximately 23 buildings were converted to condominiums resulting in approximately 313 new housing units under private ownership. The condominium conversions include multi-family apartment buildings converted into individual units, and duplex units converted to separate ownership. Most significantly, in 1996 conversions on Clarks Road created 126 condominium units, and in 1999, 1 Brown Avenue was converted into 72 condominium units and 45 Macy Street was converted into 75 new units. Table LU-8 provides a breakdown of the trend in condominium unit conversions between 1996 and 2002.

Table LU-8
Amesbury Condominium Conversions

Year	Number of Conversions	Number of Units
1996	1	126
1997	1	3
1998	3	5
1999	3	149
2000	4	6
2001	9	22
2002	1	2

Current Projects

There are several significant initiatives underway in Amesbury that will impact development trends and land use patterns in the future. The following sections provide a summary of these projects.



Downtown Redevelopment

In recent years Amesbury's downtown area has undergone numerous changes through various initiatives sponsored by the Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED) and the Alliance for Amesbury. Significant investments in the downtown have included upgrades for infrastructure and transportation enhancements, streetscape and building improvements and efforts to redevelop millyard properties. According to staff from the OCED, the results are encouraging business owners to reinvest in their properties, and the new environment is attracting residents back to the downtown for shopping as well as encouraging new retail shops and restaurants to open.

Infrastructure and Streetscape

The downtown revitalization program began in 1998, and consisted of three phases with over \$4.5 million was invested in new utilities, transportation improvements, pedestrian safety improvements, and urban design enhancements. A majority of the revitalization funding came from the Massachusetts Highway Department. Water, sewer and gas service was upgraded in Phase I, an effort to improve water quality, provide better water pressure for fire protection, and make sprinkler services available for downtown buildings. As part of Phase II, which began in 1999, the existing roadway from Main Street between Route 110 and Sparhawk Street was rebuilt, new safety enhancements were added to the Amesbury Middle School and Amesbury Post Office areas, and new curbs and sidewalks were constructed on both sides of the road. As part of these improvements, storm drains and sanitary lines were separated throughout downtown, which reduced some of the flow at the wastewater treatment plant. Phase III included many aesthetic improvements, including a new park, new trees and benches and "period lighting". Phase III restored the graceful Victorian feeling of the downtown.

New Housing

Working with private developers, the Town of Amesbury has created 70 new units of housing located in the downtown area between 2001-2004. Of these 70 units, 53 are owner-occupied condominiums and 17 are rental apartments. Ten of the 53 condominiums are affordable in perpetuity and 13 of the 17 rentals are affordable for 15 to 20 year variable terms. These new units contribute approximately one percent to the Town's total of 6,570 residential units (Census, 2000).

Other housing development in the area includes a \$1.3 million dollar development at 104-114 Main Street. Working with a private developer, the historic Rand-Adams Block was reconstructed after a fire destroyed the 13,000 square foot, three-story building in 2001. The building offers eight rental units, of which five are affordable, and four commercial spaces. At 26-28 and 32 Elm Street, a former train depot and hotel where a local business was housed for over 50 years, made a \$1.2 million dollar transformation into five affordable housing units and three new commercial spaces. 17 Main Street is the historic Counting House for the Amesbury and Salisbury Mills Park and is being transformed into four rental units, of which three are affordable, and three commercial spaces. The project is estimated to cost \$1.3 million dollars. All of these projects received one or more State grants through the Town ranging from \$500,000 to \$750,000 to offset construction and design costs.

Upper Millyard Revitalization

The Upper Millyard Revitalization Project is a \$6.5 million dollar program to renew three historic mill buildings into 46 artisan live/work condominiums and a heritage/historic museum space. The developer, E.A. Fish Associates purchased the buildings from the Town for \$353,000. These funds, working through the Town's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program and a matching urban self-help grant of \$325,000 from the Division of Conservation Services, were used to extend the Upper Millyard Park, upgrade existing and install new public facilities to accommodate the development and improve the Amesbury and Salisbury Mills Historic Park. The CDBG Program also contributed over \$2 million dollars to stabilize the buildings before seeking a developer, and \$171,000 in funding from MassDevelopment was used to remediate brownfields in the immediate area.

Lower Millyard

The Amesbury Lower Millyard is the second most studied part of town after the Upper Millyard. Comprising 12.5 acres in the Lower Millyard, and an additional 18.5 acres with the Powow Industrial Park and Carriage Hill areas, it was Amesbury's historic site of carriage making until the 1888 fire destroyed most of the factories. Considerable underutilization has been evident in the area, however, its location abutting central Market Square indicated its suitability for parking, and in 1986 a 130 space parking garage was built.

In 1988, an Urban Design Revitalization Plan, funded in part by the Mass Council on the Arts and Humanities, provided a "master plan" for Mill Street/Valley Street, Chestnut Street, with its Carriage Hill neighborhood, and the Powow Industrial Park. Sketches illustrating the proposed build out emphasized residential and parkland development and a campus of buildings for the Powow Industrial park.

In 1998 a Lower Millyard study (Central Industrial Zoning District) was completed linking this area to the Elm Street and Cedar Street corridors. Additional detailed

property analysis coupled with use planning, up to date zoning requirements, and marketing and financial analysis proposed additional public improvements. The Land Use Plan proposed the following:

- Continuation of light industrial uses in much of the district;
- Phasing out of incompatible uses, including the public works facility;
- Expanding public parking;
- Encouraging mixed uses in the Lower Millyard;
- Establishing an artisans/crafters complex;
- Streetscape enhancement of the Elm Street corridor;
- Opening up and enhancing the Back River as a pedestrian greenway;
- Converting the existing vacant industrial buildings at Oak Street to residential.

By the late 1990's, the Town owned the Wharf Property, at the confluence of the Back and Powow Rivers, as well as the Department of Public Works garage. The Wharf property was acquired by tax title, in poor condition, and was demolished due to roof failure. In addition, the Oak Street properties were purchased to be redeveloped for housing. Additional residential infill housing was created on Oakland Street and on Mill Street, and the Town moved forward with a MassHighway funded initiative for streetscape and road improvements to the Elm Street corridor. In the Cedar Street area, additional private redevelopment initiatives began for artisan uses. However, the presence of salvage and industrial operations, as well as the Department of Public Works, continues. This mix of heavy industrial operations does not encourage residential development, but has marked the area as being in transition.

In 2000 the Town began another study of the area, taking into light changed economic conditions as well as many of the redevelopment activities mentioned above. The Draft Study focuses on the disadvantages of continued heavy industry located in the area, the poor roadways and circulation, current environmental issues, and cost of potential improvements. It highlights advantages including: industrial and mixed land close to downtown, historic buildings with re-use potential, potential public investment in area amenities and infrastructure, potential cooperation of certain property owners, support of the overall business community and potentially attractive natural features. A phased development plan has been recommended, the highlights of which are the following:

- Acquisition and relocation of the salvage yard in the Lower Millyard.
- Relocation of all Town DPW facilities and services.
- Demolition of the current DPW building with the straightening of the street.
- Establishing a representational public authority with requisite economic development tools, including eminent domain powers.
- Development of park improvements and trail linkages to the Riverwalk.
- Additional Study of the Carriage Hill buildings.

The plan created for this area recognizes that the relocation of the DPW and the acquisition and relocation of the salvage yard as key elements. The DPW relocation

will allow that facility to expand which it needs to do, while removing it from a key redevelopment location. It also recognizes that the removal of the scrap yard will allow for additional parking at the foot of Carriage Hill, where parking options are scarce. The amenities of the area- two rivers, transportation links and potential open space can make the Lower Millyard an attractive and exciting venue for the future.

Transportation Center

Within the Lower Millyard, planning for a new Transportation Center, built by the Merrimack Valley Transit Authority, seeks to redevelop portions of the downtown to provide additional parking, a regional transportation hub and new commercial or mixed-use development space within the downtown area between Water Street and Chestnut Street. As part of the Transportation Facility, space will be provided for the Amesbury Senior Center and the Council on Aging. Design work for the Transportation Center is currently underway.

Powow Riverwalk

Amesbury has also begun construction of the Powow Riverwalk and Bicycle Path along the banks of the Powow River. Funding for these projects came from MassHighway enhancement funds. Construction of Phase II of the project was completed in 2001. The path uses an old railroad right-of-way along the east side of the river and connects the Lower Millyard of downtown Amesbury with the Carriage Town Market Place shopping plaza on Route 110 in an aesthetically pleasing manner. Phase I of the project will begin once construction and final design issues have been worked out. Phase I of the project will connect the completed section of the Riverwalk with the downtown area and includes a crossing of the Powow River along Main Street near Market Square, with boardwalks cantilevered off of the adjacent mill buildings. Ultimately, additional plans to use the old railroad right-of-way, which is parallel with and north of Route 110, will result in a connection to a path that leads to Salisbury.



Cedar Street

The Cedar Street mill buildings near the downtown have been the focus of several studies and building improvement efforts, including rezoning for artist live/work space. Work is currently underway to restore several of the buildings for light industrial and mixed-uses.



Route 150/I-495 Gateway Project

This large-scale planning project was proposed and defined by a feasibility study done by Terrasphere/RKG in May 2001. The project involves a total of 445 acres located on the south side of Hunt Road and on the north side of Bailey's Pond. The master plan calls for 200 condominium units around Bailey's Pond, up to 175 apartments on the former truck-stop site, a small amount of office and commercial space along Route 150 extension, 93 acres of FlexSpace/Light Industrial land along Hunt Road and an 18 hole golf course on the former landfill owned by Waste Management, Inc. A developer's solicitation was made in 2002 and a developer (Fafard) has been chosen to proceed with the project.



Golden Triangle

The Golden Triangle is the site located north of Elm Street between I-495 and I-95 has been rezoned by the Town to Office Park (OP), which includes conceptual land use plans and regulations to encourage economic development opportunities. The Town also established the Elm Street Overlay District to encourage the preservation of the existing historic structures along Elm Street as well as changes to the land use regulations that would encourage larger scale developments to be setback at least 200 feet from Elm Street. The site has been the focus of attention by the OCED in conjunction with the Alliance for Amesbury for the development of a future office park. The land is constrained by wetlands and access issues (which require further study) and a number of historical properties on the Elm Street frontage.



Kimball Road Condominiums

A private developer has proposed a large, 268 unit condominium housing project on Kimball Road and is seeking rapid approval under the state's 40B regulations. Because of its 40B status, the project at least 25%, or 67 of the units, must be affordable (and which will be added to the City's inventory). The project is presently before the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Community Identified Assets and Liabilities

As part of the process to develop a Master Plan for the Town of Amesbury, Massachusetts, members of the Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) consultant team sought input from Amesbury community members on their issues, concerns and visions for the City. The process of identifying Amesbury's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats consisted of a series of focused interviews and public meetings to gain insight on elements that should be addressed in the Master Plan. These meetings included the following:

January 16 and 17, 2003	Interviews (over 100 people)
March 1, 2003	Public Open House on Assets and Liabilities (over 125 attendees)
March 22, 2003	Public Design workshop on Visioning (over 75 attendees)

The information compiled during the interviews and input received during the public meetings has been supplemented by the results of the 2002 Citizen Survey and with observations made by the consultant team during site visits. Additional input was received from the Master Plan Steering Committee, the seven Focus Groups for each of the Master Plan Elements and staff from the Office of Community and Economic Development.

The following sections provide a summary of what members of the Amesbury community have stated as being the Town's assets and liabilities. The statements reflect individual comments and viewpoints, and may or may not have factual basis.



Assets

- Many opportunities exist for expanding development in the Downtown area, including integration of the Upper and Lower Millyards, access to the Riverwalk and the potential to incorporate open space as a public gathering area. Such opportunities will provide a distinct focal point for the area, and increase vitality.
- Recent improvements and redevelopment projects in the Downtown have triggered renewed interest in the revitalization of Amesbury's core. The community is supportive of focusing additional development and expansion of housing, goods and services for residents and attracting tourism through the cultural and historic amenities in the Downtown area
- Amesbury is rich in having many large dedicated open space areas and farms, and a strong community commitment to preserve and maintain these resources.
- Amesbury's location along both the I-95 and I-495 corridor's provides excellent access for residents to get to beaches, mountains and the Boston metropolitan

area, and also provides great resources in terms of being attractive for economic development.

- The Golden Triangle, the Industrial Park and Hunt Road/"Terrasphere" areas provide great opportunities for expansion of commercial, office and/or light industrial uses in areas with good transportation access.
- The Elm Street Corridor provides many opportunities for expansion upon Downtown redevelopment efforts, especially for resident serving retail uses.
- The Neighborhood Improvement Program was viewed as very successful for making improvements that reinforced the character and integrity of Amesbury neighborhoods.



Liabilities

- Even though opportunities exist to generate tourism by promoting cultural and recreational amenities, it is important that Downtown provide services and establishments that cater to residents. There is a desire to see the Downtown "alive throughout the day," supported by more infill and mixed-income housing. A comprehensive development plan is needed to ensure that the Downtown area evolves in a well balanced manner.
- The lack of a coordinated and convenient parking program in the Downtown area creates competition for parking between employees and customers/visitors.
- There are a number of uses in and surrounding the Lower Millyard (DPW, salvage area, automotive service stations) that deter from the overall Downtown character and may be inhibiting further economic development initiatives.
- Amesbury's access to regional transportation systems (highways, commuter rail in Newburyport) has made the City very attractive as a "commuter suburb," and there are concerns of becoming a "bedroom community" of expensive homes. More residential than non-residential growth in recent years will have significant tax implications for residents.
- Neighborhood preservation and improvements are needed in some of the older areas of the City. Traffic problems in terms of vehicle speeds and pedestrian safety needs to be addressed and pedestrian connectivity should be enhanced throughout the City. Incentives are needed to improve older homes and to clean-up clutter or debris-filled yards.
- Route 110 is currently a "hodge podge" mix of uses, with a character that is becoming more suburban strip in nature. There are opportunities for further development along the corridor, but transportation improvements are needed to

enhance access to properties and to facilitate a better flow of traffic. The character of future development should also be addressed to provide a more visually appealing environment consistent with Amesbury's rural New England atmosphere.

- Better efforts are needed to control and manage growth in outlying areas of the City. There is a need to balance the needs of growth for economic development purposes with housing needs, and to preserve lands for open space and resource conservation. Techniques are needed to guide growth to appropriate areas, to encourage redevelopment and infill in the Village Center and to promote the reuse of Mill buildings.
- Housing in outlying areas is encroaching upon natural and open space areas. Regulatory measures are needed to maintain a balance of built and un-built areas, and to direct new housing growth to appropriate areas.
- Infrastructure improvements and utility upgrades are needed to accommodate new development in some outlying areas. Capacity of infrastructure and utilities needs to be carefully managed and coordinated with land use development to accommodate current demands and to meet the needs of future growth.

Land Use and Growth Management Recommendations

The following sections outline the work of the Master Plan Steering Committee and the Land Use and Growth Management Focus Group to develop recommendations to guide future development patterns in the Town of Amesbury over the next 20 years. The recommendations are summarized on the Land Use Suitability Map.

In general, the Land Use and Growth Management recommendations are intended to achieve the following objectives for various areas in Amesbury.

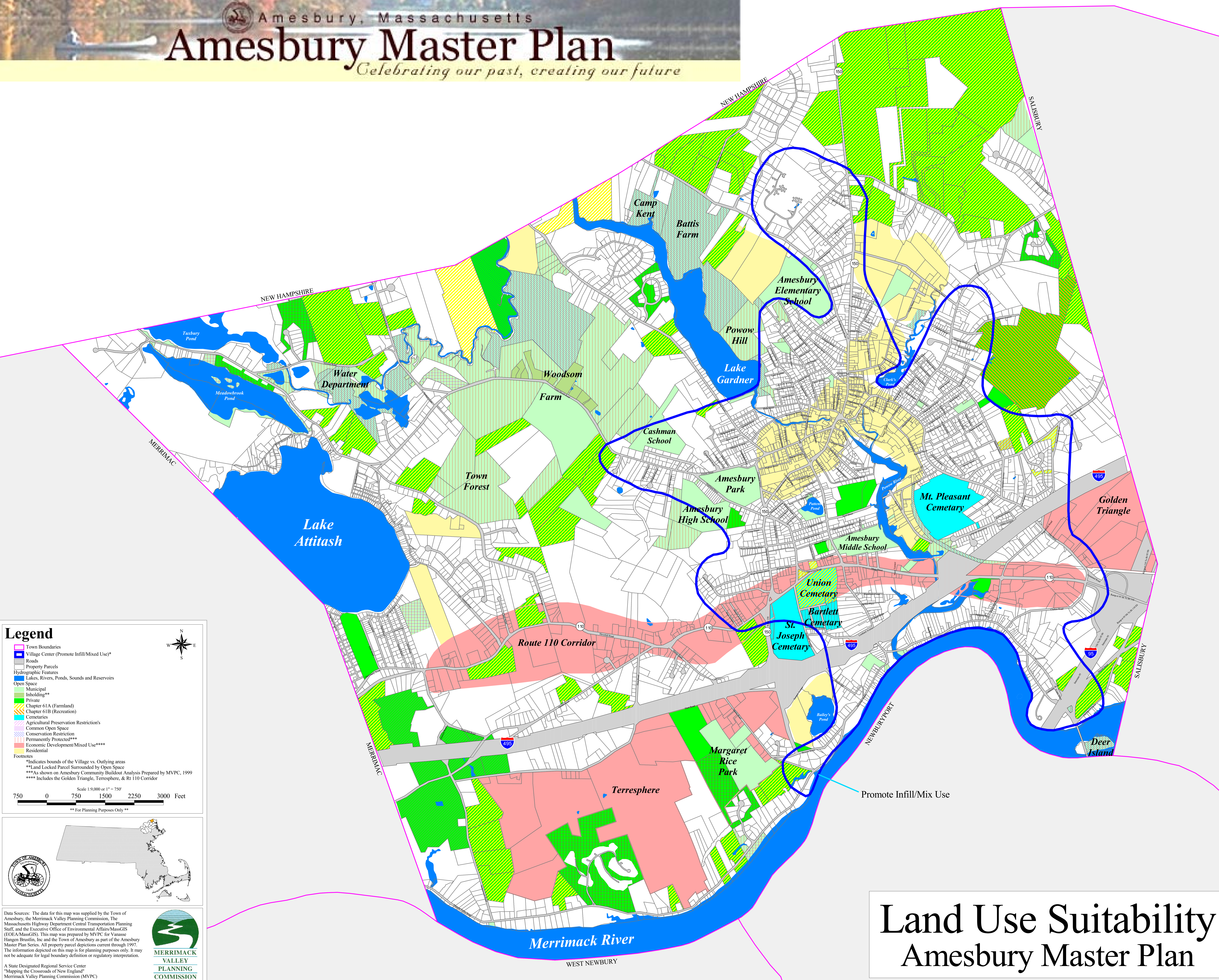
Protect Natural Resources

- In the northeast section of town, it is intended for the majority of the currently undeveloped land to be devoted for open space areas for passive recreation and preservation.
- In the northwest section of town, it is intended for the majority of the currently undeveloped land to be preserved for conservation, an area for environmental protection, consisting of important water resources, forested areas and wetland/swamps.

Amesbury, Massachusetts

Amesbury Master Plan

Celebrating our past, creating our future



Legend

- Town Boundaries
- Village Center (Promote Infill/Mixed Use)*
- Roads
- Property Parcels
- Hydrographic Features
- Lakes, Rivers, Ponds, Sounds and Reservoirs
- Open Space
- Municipal Inholding**
- Private Chapter 61A (Farmland)
- Chapter 61B (Recreation)
- Cemeteries
- Agricultural Preservation Restriction's
- Common Open Space
- Conservation Restriction
- Permanently Protected***
- Economic Development/Mixed Use****
- Residential

Footnotes

- *Indicates bounds of the Village vs. Outlying areas
- **Land Locked Parcel Surrounded by Open Space
- ***As shown on Amesbury Community Buildout Analysis Prepared by MVPC, 1999
- **** Includes the Golden Triangle, Terresphere, & Rt 110 Corridor

Scale 1:9,000 or 1" = 750'

750 0 750 1500 2250 3000 Feet

** For Planning Purposes Only **

Map of Massachusetts

MERRIMACK VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION

Wild Water International

RKG ASSOCIATES, INC.

Vinasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.

Printed June 16, 2004 MDF

Land Use Suitability

Amesbury Master Plan

- In the southwest section of town, it is intended for the majority of the currently undeveloped lands to be reserved for passive recreation and open space, and conservation purposes.

Housing

- Promote the village center for infill development, as a “receiving zone” for development that could otherwise take place in the northeast, northwest or southwest sections of town. Most residential growth is preferred to be in this area, allowing density in the center as a trade-off for preservation in outlying areas. The overarching principle is to encourage affordable living units, low maintenance living, with access to businesses and services in the downtown area.

Economic Development

- It is intended to keep economic development in the areas already suitable for commercial or industrial uses, particularly along Route 110, the Golden Triangle, and the Route 150 Gateway / “Terrasphere” area. Within the village center, promote mixed use development, with commercial enterprises being primarily professional office, commercial and community services.



Land Use Vision

The Land Use and Growth Management Focus Group developed the following Vision Statement to guide their efforts to develop recommendations:

Provide a Distinct, Attractive and Vital Downtown in a Protected Context

Amesbury will build upon and continue its heritage as a classic New England village. We will preserve the identity of neighborhoods within the Village Center, enhance the central business district and manage development in outlying areas to preserve the environmental and scenic characteristics that make Amesbury a special place to live. We will control long-term residential growth to make best use of current and economically-feasible enhancements to our City’s infrastructure. Future development will support our goals to be a sustainable community, and land use patterns will reinforce Amesbury’s small town character.



Goals, Strategies and Actions

LU-1	Preserve the unique identity of Amesbury's neighborhoods; strengthen linkages between all neighborhoods, and their relationship to Amesbury's village center.
LU-1.1	Continue to develop incentives to reuse historic buildings in the village center, especially mill sites and other buildings which reflect Amesbury's industrial heritage. <i>See also Public Facilities and Infrastructure, Goal 2</i>
	➤ Evaluate and recommend revisions or additions to Town and state regulations (zoning, design guidelines, building codes, etc.) and permitting policies/procedures to expedite reuse and redevelopment of properties in a manner consistent with goals for preservation and maintaining the historic Town character.
	➤ Ensure that Town regulations, policies and permitting approval processes encourage redevelopment and reuse of properties.
	➤ Identify and develop an inventory of abandoned or underutilized buildings, properties and other sites within the village center, and conduct site assessments to evaluate reuse potential, including any limitations, deterrents or obstacles which would limit redevelopment.
	➤ Identify options to provide financial assistance to promote adaptive reuse and infill development within the downtown center and surrounding neighborhoods. Research and summarize potential Federal, State and regional funding sources and eligibility requirements to assist with reuse and redevelopment initiatives.
LU-1.2	Encourage the clean-up and reuse of existing brownfield sites.
	➤ Prepare a Brownfields Action Plan, with PB and Municipal Council approval, to identify and prioritize clean-up efforts and assess redevelopment potential of effected parcels. Proactively explore funding sources and eligibility requirements for grants or subsidies to assist with revitalization of key sites.
	➤ Develop strategies to actively market brownfield sites for redevelopment and/or reuse.
LU-1.3	Encourage reinvestment in established older neighborhoods to enhance and preserve neighborhood character. <i>See also Public Facilities and Infrastructure, Goal 2</i>
	➤ Modify the Neighborhood Conservation District zoning by-law to make it easier to implement, then formally endorse and adopt a map identifying Amesbury's Neighborhood Districts, as provided in the Preservation Plan.
	➤ Identify and prioritize neighborhoods most in need of upgrades by conducting assessments of neighborhood conditions (land use patterns, public infrastructure, neighborhood amenities, housing stock, etc.) and holding neighborhood meetings to identify desired improvements and potential benefits.
	➤ Continue building on the past funding of the Neighborhood Improvements Projects program to strengthen and support existing neighborhoods.
	➤ Encourage the use of Zoning Overlay Districts, and include appropriate design guidelines, requirements for provision of public improvements and land use regulations to preserve and reinforce the unique characteristics of these areas.
LU-2	Promote growth and development within the downtown business district to encourage a vibrant mixed use environment.
LU-2.1	Plan and promote redevelopment of the Lower Millyard, including the area's integration with the surrounding downtown center. <i>See also Economic Development, Goal 2</i>
	➤ Explore additional design techniques to link the Upper and Lower Millyard through open space, enhanced pedestrian connections and other urban design techniques.
	➤ Present for Municipal Council approval a development action plan for the redevelopment of the Lower Millyard incorporating the findings of the recent Lower Millyard Study with recalculations of potential costs.

LU-2	Promote growth and development within the downtown business district to encourage a vibrant mixed use environment.
	➤ Present for Municipal Council approval a development action plan for the redevelopment of Carriage Hill and the R Street area
LU-2.2	Provide additional public gathering spaces and recreational amenities in the downtown. <i>See also Transportation, Goal 4, and Natural Resources, Goal 2</i>
	➤ Provide bicycle and pedestrian linkages to surrounding neighborhoods, including access to the Back River, Clark's Pond and the Cedar Street areas, as well as to Camp Kent, both extending from the Lower Mill Yard.
	➤ Identify areas where public plazas and green space could be developed to serve as places for outdoor events, and active or passive recreational uses.
LU-2.3	Create a critical mass of downtown residents to support commercial establishments in a revitalized downtown area.
	➤ Actively market downtown sites for re-use and infill developments to provide mixed-income housing opportunities interspersed with commercial and office uses in the downtown center.
LU-2.4	Promote methods to attract and sustain a variety of commercial uses in the downtown area to provide goods and services for residents and visitors.
	➤ Encourage a mix of uses that provide daytime, evening and weekend attractions, including a variety of restaurants, coffee shops, cultural/theatrical venues, and retail shops that serve residents needs and attract tourists.
LU-2.5	Reinforce the DRC Committee's role in the advisory process for review of projects in the downtown.
	➤ Update the Design Guidelines to show clear distinctions between design review for the village center as opposed to design review for an outlying industrial/commercial zone.
	➤ Explore the means which will encourage developments to reflect Amesbury's distinct New England village character and layout, and that fit the scale and character of surrounding neighborhoods.
	➤ Explore incentives that encourage developers to maintain the historic character of the downtown through implementation of the Design Guidelines during redevelopment of buildings and properties.

LU-3	Manage growth and development in outlying areas to preserve Amesbury's environmental and cultural resources consistent with the Town's historic New England village character.
LU-3.1	Evaluate existing regulatory measures and consider new techniques to manage development in outlying areas. <i>See also Natural Resources, Goal 2, and Public Facilities and Infrastructure, Goal 1</i>
	➤ Consider provisions such as Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), revisions to the Cluster Development Permit, Scenic Overlay Districts or hill-top development restrictions to appropriately guide and manage new development patterns.
	➤ Protect agricultural and open space properties through programs such as Purchase of Development Rights, incentives under Chapter 61 and other Agricultural Preservation Restrictions.
LU-3.2	Plan for appropriate long range commercial and industrial development in suitable areas.
	➤ Evaluate the appropriateness and suitability of existing industrial and commercial zoning districts.
	➤ Evaluate the feasibility of developing areas where regional access and infrastructure already exist; particularly on the Golden Triangle, Hunt Road and the Route 150 Gateway.
	➤ Develop a Route 110 Corridor Overlay District that provides appropriate controls and design guidelines for commercial and industrial development to achieve a harmonious blend for a mixed use environment that is well integrated with the character of the surrounding neighborhoods.

LU-4	Improve the Town's administrative capacity to manage growth and development.
LU-4.1	Address the need for better enforcement of regulations. <i>See also Public Facilities and Infrastructure, Goal 3</i>
	➤ Complete a comprehensive analysis of the Town's permitting process, including defining the precise legal and planning role of each reviewing board, the bounds of each board's discretion, permissible development timelines, and recommendations for methods to improve the effectiveness of the process.
	➤ Consult with current Building Commissioner as to the scope of his work, what resources are needed to better do his work, and what, if any, required tasks prevent timely completion of inspections.
	➤ Consult with recent contractors/developers as to their perspective on policies and procedures for permitting, obtaining inspections and/or enforcement, and on interactions with boards and committees.
LU-4.2	Improve local administrative capacity to manage growth.
	➤ Provide regular training for Town employees and Board and Commission members on measures and techniques to manage growth and development patterns. Require referencing the Master Plan in their decision making process.
	➤ Evaluate long-range fiscal impacts of future growth and development for Town services, infrastructure and facilities by developing a comprehensive build-out report that addresses all forms of development and sets out a range of scenarios under present zoning,.
	➤ Ensure that the Zoning By-Law and other ordinances affecting land use are consistent with the Master Plan.
	➤ Adopt a permanent zoning bylaw that will replace the smart growth by-law, yet utilize a more evenly administered performance based point system.
	➤ Institute implementation and updates of GIS data sets and software applications to maintain mapping of Town land use patterns, zoning, environmental resources and identified neighborhood areas consistent with state standards through MassGIS. Use GIS systems as a decision making tool for evaluating long range impacts of future development proposals for consistency with the Master Plan.
	➤ Using GIS systems develop maps to monitor those areas suitable for growth (i.e. the village center) and development and those areas prioritized for preservation.